

A Roadmap for Infection Control and Prevention

Most hospitals have implemented some of these infection control measures in their organizations. The difference between relying on each individual component versus a total Infection Control and Prevention Plan often spells the difference between stellar performance and average control. As more infection rates are published, a solid infection control plan can be the ammunition you need to drive patients to your hospital and away from a competitor's. Pike Systems specializes in the integration and implementation of a total Infection Control Program that delivers results!

Infection control is everyone's responsibility from the nursing staff to the doctors to the techs and on to the housekeeping staff members. On the road to infection prevention, housekeeping is actually the last line of defense against the spread of infection. With patient rooms cleaned only once per day, patient rooms can become re-infected as soon as a new person steps foot into the room after cleaning has been completed. For this reason, other infection control measures are equally important in the reduction of MRSA, C-Diff, and other Hospital Acquired Infections (HAI's).

1. **Handwashing** – Handwashing is the single most effective method of infection control. While this has long been recognized, numerous studies have shown that hand hygiene compliance among healthcare workers is typically 50% at best. Often dryness and irritation are common reasons for a lack of compliance. It's important for healthcare facilities to recognize the importance of handwashing and reinforce it with a quality hand washing program that provides products that do not dry skin or cause irritation. From there, facilities can work to obtain better handwashing compliance through a proper and frequent training regiment, marketing program, and the use of surveillance software to track success!
2. **Standardized Housekeeping Cleaning Procedures** – In order for the housekeeping department to effectively do their part in controlling the spread of HAI's, each housekeeping staff member must be training on the accepted procedure and the process must be followed by each member of the staff. Adaptations of procedures by the housekeeping staff open the hospital and the department up to scrutiny and jeopardize patient health.
3. **Innovative Cleaning Technologies** – With the added government involvement in healthcare funding, hospitals and healthcare facilities must constantly improve their infection control measures by adopting the latest technologies available. Antimicrobial coatings, UV Lighting, and vapor-mist decontamination and infection control technology make producing clean and infection-free hospitals easier than ever before. These technologies are not created equal and do carry a hefty price tag, however, the initial purchase price is often offset quickly by the savings produced by reduce HAI's not to mention that added marketing opportunities that improve patient acquisition and retention.
4. **Quality Control** – If you can measure it, you can manage it. Be sure that what looks clean, is clean, and hold your staff accountable. Quality control measures should be

in place for each department in the hospital that impacts patient health. The housekeeping department's processes should be monitored routinely and validated using an ATP meter or other type of scientific testing. The medical staff should be observed following handwashing protocols and following practices that prevent cross-contamination. The health of patients is everyone's responsibility and is far too important to deny quality control monitoring.